

Expectations of the Advisor for Members in Discernment
Committee on Ministry: Preparation
St. Louis Association of the Missouri Mid-South Conference
United Church of Christ

The appointed Advisor to a Member In Discernment (MID) with the St. Louis Association serves as a communication and relational link between the MID, the MID's home church, and the Committee On Ministry: Preparation (COM:P). The specific purpose of the advisor is to embody the support of the COM:P and keep it informed about the MID and the MID's progress toward ordination. The advisor needs to be sensitive to their dual role of supporting the MID as well as participating in decisions about the MID's fitness and readiness for ministry.

The tasks of the advisor include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. Hold an initial meeting with the MID, home church pastor and support committee representative soon after approval for MID status. Review the expectations, requirements, and procedures of the MID relationship and develop an understanding of how the advisor and MID will relate and work together. At this time the advisor will distribute and review the MID documents.
2. Ensure that the MID is placed on the appropriate Association and Conference mailing lists such as newsletters, annual meeting materials, mailings to clergy, etc.
3. Maintain an active relationship with the MID that would be characterized as supportive, frank, and open in assisting with problems of concerns encountered by the MID.
4. Have at least one face-to-face meeting with the MID annually to review educational progress, growth, goals, and needs. Of primary importance is maintaining monthly telephone or email contacts with the MID. An occasional invitation to lunch or coffee is also recommended.
5. Be prepared to report on the MID's activities and issues at each meeting of the COM:P.
6. When committee interviews are scheduled, follow up with the MID to insure that the pastor or a committee member from the home church will attend with the MID. Be present each time the member in discernment has an update interview. Following interviews under ordinary circumstances, correspond via email with those interviewed and their sponsoring churches to summarize the meeting including any decisions or suggestions offered. Any specific action needs to be followed up with a written letter. If the advisor is unable to attend the meeting, it is his/her responsibility to contact the chairperson for a meeting update.
7. Serve as a liaison with the MID's home church support committee to ensure that the home church and MID are in active relationship with each other and the COM:P. Encourage the home church to provide support for the MID. *Assure that a representative of the home church is present for each update interview.*
8. Keep the MID on track with the COM:P expectations of the MID, including the steps the MID is to complete and the documents that need to be placed in the MID's file in the Association office. Every three months, check the MID's file in the Conference Office to update and issue reminders of specific needs to the MID.

9. If possible, visit the MID in his or her seminary setting, contextual education setting, or other settings where the member in discernment may have a role. Find opportunities to be present in worship in which the member in discernment preaches, leads the liturgy, or in educational settings where the MID teaches.
10. Coordinate the work of the MID's ordination paper review team.
11. Encourage the MID to take responsibility for attending Conference and Association functions, meetings, and events.
12. With conference staff, participate with the MID and home church in planning and leading the ordination service. Purchase (with committee funds) a bible and present it to the MID at ordination.